

A GENERAL
TESTIMONY

To the Everlasting Syn. 7. 67. 33

Truth of God;

Partly intended for the Inhabitants of *Neiber-
Broughton* in the County of *Leicester*.

Wherein there is some short Relation of the Man-
ner of my Convincement; and also, some few of the
Sufferings which were inflicted upon me by some of
the said Inhabitants, for my faithful Testimony, which
I bare for God and his blessed Truth.

With Copies of two Letters sent to the Spiritual or Ec-
clesiastical Court (so called) in *Leicester* or else where, where they
are found persecuting the Innocent for their Consciences to God.

And the Court's Answer, whereby their Cruelty may be
seen, and also how willing they are to keep men in Prison, and how
unwilling or unable they are to give a Reason of their Faith con-
cerning their Practice, Church and Worship.
With a Postscript to them and the Priests.

By J. W. a Sufferer in *Leicester* County Court, where Nine of his Bre-
thren are also Prisoners for the Testimony of a Good Conscience, being
all except one cast in by the Priests, and Courts called *Spiritual*.

We unto them that decree unrighteous Decrees, and write Grievousness,
which they have prescribed, to turn aside the Right from Judgment, and
to take away the Right from the poor of my People, Isa. 10. 1, 2.
Then shall the Seers be ashamed, and the Diviners confounded: yea, they
shall all cover their Lips; for there is no Answer of God, Mic. 3. 7.

Printed in the Year, 1677.

A GENERAL

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A. General
TESTIMONY
 FOR THE
 Everlasting Truth
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G O D

Partly intended for the Inhabitants of *Nether-Broughton* in the County of *Leicester*, wherein there is some short Relation of my Manner of Convincement; and also, some few of the Sufferings which were inflicted upon me by some of the said Inhabitants, for my Faithful Testimony, which I bare for God and his blessed Truth.

Friends and Neighbours,

I T being so ordered, that I and my Family are removed from you, it is in my Heart once more to put you in mind of that blessed everlasting Truth which I bore Testimony unto when I was with you; for it is the same that ever it was to all them that believe in the Light, and faithfully obey it; I cannot but once more exhort you unto it, as knowing that there is sufficiency in it to preserve out of the Evil, which is the Cause of many Sorrows in this World, and in the World to come.

When first I came to inhabit amongst you, I was in Profession a *Baptist*, and zealous in that Way; but, as their manner is

I could give Flattering Titles to Man, and say [You] to a single Person, and joyn with you in some of your Vain Customs and Fashions; and then the greatest part of you seemed to have Great Respect for me, although I did not go with you to your Worship: But after a little while, the Lord in his Everlasting Love, by his blessed Light in my Conscience, opened my Understanding, whereby I came to see, that notwithstanding my Profession, and although I did not joyn with you in the grossest Actions, yet I was not wholly redeemed out of the World's spirit; and as I came to close with the blessed Light of Christ Jesus, who is the true Light, that lighteth every one that cometh into the World; it let me see my shortness in the things of God, and where all the Priests and Professors were, who believed not in this blessed Light in their own Consciences, and that those poor despised People, called *Quakers*, whom both Professor and Prophane derided, was God's chosen People, which he had chosen to place his Name in and amongst, and that I was to wait in Silence with them to feel that which I had heard them declare of, and the Scriptures of Truth pointed at; for God did open my Understanding and an invisible Eye in me, by which I saw through the several Outward Dispensations spoke of in the Scriptures of Truth, and that the lesser made way for the greater, and that Christ Jesus was the Substance or End of the Types and Shadows, and an Everlasting High Priest, not made after the Law of a Carnal Commandment, but after the Power of an Endless Life, to which all were to give heed unto in their own Particulars; for he guides the Feet in the Way of Peace, and condescends those that are willing to follow him in the Self-denying Life unto the holy Hill of *Sion*, where their Bread and their Water is sure; to whom be Praise for evermore.*

And as I came to wait in the true Silence of all fleshly Reasoning and Imaginations about the Meanings of the Scriptures, my Understanding was more and more opened, and the blessed Light more and more shined in my inward parts, by which I came to see, that I ought not to put off my Hat in Honour to any Man, nor say You to a single Person; for I saw that God *Thou'd Adam*, and *Adam Thou'd God*; and *Jacob's Sons Thou'd their Father*, and that it was the Language which all the holy Men used to God and

and one to another, and God to them; and it opened in my Heart, that if I p it off my Hat, or said *Ton* to a single person, to please that Part in Man which sought for Honour, *I did it to please the Devil*; for it was nothing but him, who for his Pride was cast out of Heaven, and was entred into the Heart of Man, which should be the Temple of God, and there sought for Honour above God. I saw that the Priests and Professors would *Thou* God in their Prayers, and yet be offended that they were *Thou'd* themselves: What is this but *Lucifer*? And further, I came to see that God's Name ought not to be taken in vain, nor used in a vain customary way, when in the Heart he is not regarded; and therefore when I met People, not knowing what they were going about, I could not bid them *Godspeed*, nor say *God* *morrow*; for I saw that many used those words who did not regard God in their Hearts, nor hardly think of him when they spoke them, and therefore I could not use them, although I had no ill will to any of you in my Heart, but wished your well doing, and that you might prosper in every Good Work: But, O! how greatly were many of you offended at me, because I could not for Conscience sake joyn with you in that which I saw to be Evil! and some of you sought Occasion against me, which I freely forgive; for I can truly say, I thought nothing too dear to give up for the Testimony of Jesus, and that your Souls might be won to the Lord; so that I can truly say in the Presence of the Lord, in which at this time I am, That I loved my Neighbour as my self. And as soon as I had a House in the Town to receive Friends in, I was willing in Love to your Souls, as well as my own, that there might be Meetings in it; and the Lord God, in his Everlasting Love both to me and you, sent his Servants under my Roof, to my great satisfaction, who preached the Everlasting Gospel in your Ears, so that many of you heard the Sound thereof, and were reached and convinced by it; in that day it was lovely unto many of you, and those that declared it unto you were esteemed by some of you as them that could play well of an Instrument. But, oh! how did the Devil get up in the Priests of the Town, *John Sheerperson* and *Thomas Bley*, who stirred up like the Persecuting Jews of old) what Persecution they could to stop the Work of the Lord? How often did

Thomas

Thomas Bloy go to the Magistrates in order to get me into Prison; for having Meetings at my House, who told the Magistrates in my hearing, *That if I was let alone I would undo the whole Town;* for, said he, *this Fellow keeps a Conventicle at his House every Moneth;* so I was sent to prison, but the Lord wrought much for his Honour; for at that time many Eyes were opened to see over the Persecuting Priests, and several at that time seeing his Envy, and how unlike the Ministers of Christ he was, who never went about to force any by outward law, or corporal punishment to their Way, quite left him, and became honest Friends to Truth, and so remain to this day; and soon after I came out of prison, that I might be wearied out of the Town for want of a Livelihood, the Mill was taken from me, and let to another for the same Rent, which I duly paid, although I had laid out almost all I had in repairing of it, for which I had no satisfaction, although nothing justly could be laid to my Charge; but as the Persecutors of old did against *Daniel* concerning the Law of his God, for *Christopher Haley*, who took the Mill from me, said, *If I would go to the Church, and do as my Neighbours did, I should continue in the Mill:* And at another time he said, *It was not fit that I should keep the Mill, because,* said he, *you so draw the People after you;* my Answer was, I draw them not, if any be drawn it is the Lord that draweth them; he said, *But you do, or else they lye, and that I will say to their Faces* meaning some of the People of *Nether-Broughton*; and a few Week after I was turned out of the Mill. I with some other Friends in the Town were fined four Shillings apiece for not going to the Steeple-house, for which we had Goods taken out of our Houses, yet notwithstanding all the Cruelty of Man the Truth prospered in the Hearts of some, although some others who had largely confessed to the Truth, for Fear of the Persecution, and for the Love which they had to the Friendship and Preferment of the World, went back again, which my Soul truly pities; for their Case is miserable except they return and remember their first Love to God, and imbrace his blessed Light in their Consciences, which will let them see the Evil of their Wayes, if they turn unto it, but if they will still go on in Rebellion against it, it will be their Condemnation. So dear Friends and Neighbours, whilst the Spirit of
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the Lord is striving with you, be obedient unto it, and sleight not your Day of Visitation; for thus saith the Lord, *My Spirit shall not alwayes strive with Man*; and if it once cease striving, then Hardness of Heart will enter, & when such have filled up their Measures, utter Destruction will be their Portion from the hand of the Just God, who desireth not the Death of a Sinner; but had rather they would return and live; yet if they will not return at the Reproofs of his Instructions which is the Way to Life, he will reward them according to the Deeds done in the Body. Dear Neighbours, it is the Desire of my Heart, that Christ Jesus may not have Cause to say by you, as once he said to Jerusalem. *Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy Children together, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, and ye would not? Behold! your House is left unto you desolate*; Oh, said he, *that thou hadst known in this thy Day the things that belong to thy Peace, but now they are hid from thine Eyes*. And oh ye Inhabitants of *Nether-Broughton*, have not some of you beaten, and abused some of the Servants of the Lord, and set them in the Stocks, and taken away our Goods several times for our peaceable meeting together to wait upon the Lord in Obedience to the Requirings of his blessed Spirit in us. Oh *Nicholas Man*! How barbarous, cruel and deceitful have thy Actions been to me, and several others who took away my Goods, when my Body was in Prison for the Testimony of Jesus, without regard to Wife and small Children; thou sufferedst *Robert Stevenson* that wicked, drunken Informer to pay his Scores at the Ale-house with some of my Goods, and the rest ye shuffled off, some one way, and some another, as is well known in the Town: And how deceitfully didst thou deal with my Mother *Brown* and others, but how did the Hand of the Lord meet with thee and the Informer? I speak not to praise thee, the Lord is my witness, but that thou mayest return and repent and shew Mercy; for thou mayest see that the Lord is able to consume thee in a moment of time: I might say something of what hath happened to some others who have had a Hand in persecuting the Innocent; but I shall forbear at this time, and leave things unto the Lord, who is the Just Judge, and whose dreadful Vengeance will over-

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take the wicked, but *Peace is sown for the Righteous, and Joy for the Upright in Hearts*; and therefore my Dear Friends, who are convinced of the Truth, and make profession of the same, I have a few words to say unto you, that ye may be faithful to the Lord in your Day and Generation; for the Lord hath a Blessing in Store for you, if you will walk worthy of it: Fear not the wrath of Man; for it shall turn to the Glory of God, as you abide faithful.

Dear Friends, the Honour of God is greatly concerned in your Faithfulness, so all mind your Places, and take heed of the Love and Friendship of the World; for it is Enmity with God, and the carnal-minded man or woman is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be; for *To be carnally minded is Death, but to be spiritually-minded is Life and Peace*; so follow that which makes for Peace with the Everlasting God, and be diligent in keeping to your Meetings, and when you are there, let your minds be gathered inward into the heavenly Silence, waiting upon the Lord, that you may feel the Arm of his Power within you to uphold you, and to arm you against all the Assaults of the Enemy, within and without: And fear not the Threatnings of the Hirceling Priests; for the Lord will fight for us, if we keep faithful unto him; he made the Chariot Wheels of *Pharaoh* draw heavily, so that the *Egyptians* said, *Let us flee from the Face of Israel*; for the Lord fighteth for them against the *Egyptians*: And he is the same that ever he was unto those that put their trust in him. You know how the other Priest strove to hinder the work of the Lord in the Hearts of the People of the Town, and how *Thomas Bley* threatened to have me in the Goal; and a little while after I was put into prison, he was turned out of his Place, and if this that now is in place will not take warning by his Brethren that were there before him, but will strive to stir up Persecution against the Innocent, as they did, let him know that the Lord will meet with him: And so my Friends, mind you your Places, and keep on your Journey towards spiritual *Canaan*, where the spiritual Milk and Honey is known, and the Wine of the Kingdom is drunk to the reviving & refreshing of the little Babes, and feeble Folk in *Israel*; where the Word of Consolation and Reconciliation is known. So dear Friends, remember

the Testimony which I was constrained to bear, when I was with you, against the vain Customs of feasting and banqueting; O the hurt that that hath done in the Town of *Nether-Broughton*! it hath drawn many into idle Discourses, foolish Jestings and Laughter, which is Madness, and hath elevated the Mind above the Witness of God, which (if it was minded) would reprove for those things.

But Friends, keep your Hands clean, and touch not the Unclean thing, then will the Lord receive you, he will be your Father, and you shall be his People.

So in True and Unfeigned Love unto you and my former Neighbours, I rest

Your Friend,

*Leicester. County Goal, the
6th of the 12th Month,
1676.*

John Wilsford.

To the Spiritual or Ecclesiastical Court
(so call'd) in *Leicester*, or elsewhere,
where they are found Persecuting
the Innocent for their Consciences
to God.

Come ye spiritual men (so called) What Scripture have you to put men into Prison about Church and Worship to God? Consider it well, and give an Answer in Soberness. Its, said *Rev. 2. 10. Behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into Prison*: But its no where said in the Scriptures of Truth, That Ministers of Christ, or right-spirited Men, should cast any into

Prison about the Worship of God, or things pertaining to the
Conscience. So see whose Servants ye are: Do ye not know
who set the *Sabeans* on work to take away *Iob's* Goods for his
Integrity to God?

And how far did the Excommunication that was in use in the Apostles dayes extend? Did it extend so far as to put men into Prison for term of Life, except they would come and agree with them, and give them so much Money, five or six pounds, or more, or less, as they could get it? Answer in Plainnes, according to Scripture; for the People are dissatisfied with your Goings on, finding no such Practices amongst the primitive Christians.

Its true, *Saul* had Letters from the Chief Priest, to go to *Damascus*, to bring those that called on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ to *Jerusalem*, much like your Practices now adayes; but we do not find that he did so after he came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Its laid, *John* law a Beast come up out of the Earth, and he caused all both Small and Great, Rich and Poor, Free and Bond to receive a Mark in their Right Hand or in their Foreheads, and that no man might buy or sell save he that had the Mark, or the Name of the Beast, or the Number of his Name. And how far short is your *Excommunicato & Capiendo* Writs of the e things, if God had no more Mercy then you, who are for your own sinister Ends? Nay, Are not they and other things now put in Execution against Dissenters, the same that *John* (*Revelat.* 13.) fore-saw, and fore-told should come? For, what is the Beast? Is it not that Beast-like Will or Devouring Nature in fallen Man from whence all this Persecution ariseth against Dissenters? And do not the Two Horns of the Beast something relemble the *Papists* and those of the *Protestants*, who are pushing at their Fellow-Creatures about Religion and Worship to God? And is it not your Places to see that Right be done to the Fatherless and Widows?

Is not that the pure Religion, and undefiled before God, to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Afflictions?

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But how ye visit them is well known in the Countries, who end Families to pieces by causing Fathers to be cast into Prison, and so in effect make both Fatherless and Widows, if not worse; for is it not worse for a Woman to have a Husband to maintain in Prison, and her self, and it may be a company of small Children at home, then if she had no Husband? Ye merciless Men! do ye think ye are not seen? yes certainly, the Light is come, Glory to God for evermore, that is discovering of your Nakedness, and your Shame shall appear more and more, *the Mouth of the Lord hath spoken it*: So it would be well for you to open the Prison Doors, and Repent in time (if happily ye can find a place) for the Cry of the Fatherless and Widdows, and Families distressed (by Reason of your Cruelties) is entred into the Ears of the Lord God of Sabbaths, like the Blood of Righteous *Abel*, whom *Cain* Murdered about Sacrifice or Offering to God; and when the Lord comes to avenge the Cause of his Elect Suffering Seed, it will not be your Law that will excuse you any more then the *Jews* Law did excuse them, who said, *They had a Law, and by their Law Christ ought to dye*. So consider your Wayes in time, lest the Lord break you into pieces, and give you your Portion where there is Weeping, and Wailing and Gnashing of Teeth, where the Worm never dyeth, and the Fire goeth not out. And this know, the Lord hath a People in this Nation of *England*, whose Names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, that cannot bow to your Wills, nor satisfie your covetous Ends, although ye may be suffered to cast some of them into Prison, as the Persecutors of old have done, whose steps ye follow; and if your Works be like theirs, can ye expect that you Wages will be any better? No surely; the Lord our God, whom we serve, and for whose sake we suffer, is a just God, and his Wayes are equal; therefore in Love to your Souls, it is in my Heart to Advise you, To leave off sending your Apparators about the Country to disquiet honest People, who are willing to labour in the Creation to maintain their Families, without being chargeable to any.

Do ye think it is for the King's profit to suffer you to make a Prey upon his loving and peaceable Subjects, as ye have

have done upon some; getting their Money or imprisoning their Bodies? the Lord sees you, and most men see what it is you most aim at, your own Actions make you manifest; therefore turn to the blessed Light in your own Consciences, that so you may see your selves, as well as others see you, and by it be led to do unto all men as ye would they should do unto you; for this is commendable amongst men, and the fulfilling of the Law.

This is written in True Love to your Souls, as a warning unto you to leave off Oppressing the People, by One whom ye never admonished to come to any of your Parish-Churches (so called) yet a deep Sufferer under your Cruelty, upon a Misnomer, Forty Miles from his Wife and small Children :

Leicester-County. Goal, the }
1st of the 10th Month, }
1676.

John Wilsford.

Ye

Ye Men belonging to the Court in Leicester called *Spiritual* or *Ecclesiastical*, &c.

I Wrote a Letter which was delivered unto some of you at the Sign of the Angel in Leicester upon the 8th of the 10th Mo. 1676. but having no Answer, it is in my Heart to commit a few words more unto your Consideration, and see if ye will answer them, & convince me of my error (if in one I be) or else release me out of Prison; for, is it not a shame for you to keep men in prison, & not endeavour to shew them their Faults? Is it not your Places to prove, that yours is the true Church, and your Worship that of the Spirit, that which Christ Jesus set up above sixteen hundred Years ago, *John 4.* when he told the Woman of *Samarita*, *They worshipped they knew not what?* And is it not your Places to rightly inform the Minds of People? Do you think it is enough to barely say, *I admonish you to come to Church*, and never go about to prove that your Church is the true Church, and yet force People unto it? I and some others were once before you, and I desired you to inform me which was the true Church that so I might come unto it; but your Answer was, *Nay, nay, do as God puts it into your Hearts till you hear from us again*; and we have taken your Advice, and yet ye have caused some of us to be put into prison since; and let me tell you, when I was but young I had much Zeal for God, and was afraid of Damnation, so I was diligent to go to Church (as it was called) and in saying the Catechism, but after a little while the times turned, and then the Catechism and Common-Prayer also was laid aside; as things not useful for Salvation, and most of the Priests turned like the Wind, and pretended great Reformation therein; but the Lord God in his Everlasting Love opened my Understanding, although but young in Years, to see it, that they were covetous and proud

and would not stand to their Religion, but turned for their Gain, and sprinkled Infants with water out of a Balon, which they had no more Scripture for then they had for the *Four*; and I came to see, that most of their Practices were contrary to the Practices of the Ministers of Christ in the primitive times; but I say, that they were much like the false Prophets and Teachers of old; and I saw, that those that would put into their Mouthes, they would preach Peace unto, but if any kept back, they prepared War against them, and put them into prison; so I quite left them (But take notice) you *Common-Prayer* men left me before I left you, so that, if any be to blame it is your selves, that would stand no better to your Religion: I and many others might have done what we would for you almost 20 Years together, and now ye have got a little Power into your Hands, ye would force us to your *Common-Prayer* again, which ye left your selves, when it was out of Fashion, and the then Rulers of the Land did not like of it; and if we shou'd turn to it again for Fear of your Cruelty, it is a great Question whether ye would stand to it your selves or no, (if a Change should come) we have great cause to believe ye will not; for it is well known how often the Priests have turned already, and therefore I conclude, that we the People of God in scorn called *Quakers* had better keep our Religion, which is founded upon the Rock Christ Jesus, which the Gates of Hell can never prevail against, then turn to yours, and be to seek again if a Change should come: It is a sad thing to consider how the poor People of *England* have been led about with a Company of blind, covetous & self ended Priests, who teach for Doctrine the Precepts of Men, and preach for Hire and Tythes, as the false Prophets of old, *For Handsfuls of Barley, and Pieces of Bread, and under a Pretence read long Prayers made ready to their Hands.* So consider your wayes and doings, and take heed of going about to force any to your way and worship, except ye can prove it agreeable to the worship of Christ Jesus, which is in the Spirit and Truth: And let me further tell you, that your forcing People to your way, and getting their Money, maketh you look more like unto Antichrist then Christ, and more like *Papists*, who take Money for Pardons then true *Protestants*; for if one would conform to your way after they are

put into your Courts, and excommunicated, they cannot without Money; so see how unlike the Apostles ye are, and how like unto the *Papsts*; had Christ or his Apostles any Money for pardoning Sins or Faults? but I know no Fault that I am in for leaving your Church, and joyning to the Church of Christ Jesus, who is the Rock of Ages, and Foundation of many Generations and therefore I do not intend ye shall have one penny of me, nor of any for me: And this know, that if ye keep me and my Brethren called *Quakers* in prison, the Lord our God will plead our Cause with you, and break your Peace, and bring down your haughty minds; for it is against him who hath appeared in us, which makes us differ from you, that ye are striving against, but it is in vain, he will be too hard for you; ye may as easily hinder the Wind from blowing, and the Sun from shining, as stop the work which the Lord hath begun in the Hearts of his People; and the more ye strive, the more ye render your selves odious to God and all sober People; for saith Christ, *By their Fruits shall ye know them* (and Persecution is a Fruit of the wicked *nc.*) This is written by one who wisheth you well, and whose Prayers have been to God for you, that ye may see the Evil of your ways and break off from them before the Lord bring his Righteous Judgments upon you, which will certainly come except ye repent, and leave off oppressing the People, and open the Prison Doors, and let the oppressed go free; for we who are called *Quakers*, are a People that do what we do for Conscience Sake to God, and not in Contempt to any one, and the Lord taketh what is done unto his, as done unto himself, see *Mat. 23. 5.* and read it at your leisure: And if we were really Offenders, as we are not, ye ought not to deal by us as ye have done; how did the Apostles deal with Offenders and scandalous walkers? did they do any more then disown them, or exclude them out of the Church (after the second or third Admonition) or deliver them up to Satan; for not to be of the Church of Christ, is to be of the Synagogue of Satan: But we have excluded our selves from you, because of your disorderly walking, and we have Warrant for it in Scripture; for the Apostle saith, *If any have a Form of Godliness and not the Power, from such turn away*; and we could not find Power amongst you to give us Victory over

our Sins ; and I do not understand, that ye your selves feel Power over your Sins ; for is there not a Complaint in your Steepe-Houses Week after Week, and Year after Year, *That ye are Miserable Offenders*, and that *There is no Health in you*, and ye follow too much the *Devices of your own Hearts*, and that ye are *erred and strayed from the Wayes of Godlike lost Sheep*. Ye shameless men ! Are ye gone from the Wayes of God your selves ? and yet do you cause us to be cast into Prison, because we for Conscience Sake, and for the Good of our own Souls, which is of more value then all the World, cannot go with you out of the Way of God ? Oh blush for Shame ye proud Priests and Court-men, and repent ; do ye think ye are not seen ? are ye not more for Money then Reformation ? The Heavenly God, and good People see you, and ye cannot hide your selves from the Day of the Lord that is coming, which shall burn as an Oven, *And all the proud and all that do wickedly shall be as Stubble*, and the day that cometh shall urn them up, and leave them neither Root nor Branch ; so remember that ye are once more warned,

By your Friend *John Wilsford*, whom ye keep in Prison upon a *Misnomer*, 40 Miles from his tender wife and small Children.

Leicester County Gaol
the 11th of the 11th
Mo. An. Dom. 1676.

The Court's Answer.

This was delivered to some of them by the Hands of *Hester Dask*, who said, that one of them said, *We have read his order over, but we will not take Care to send him an Answer, but we will take Care to keep him close where he is.*

Postscript

A Postscript.

WO unto you Persecuting Priests and Courtiers,
 the Lord's Controversie is great with you :
 Is it not a Shame for you who pretend to sit as Judges
 in Spiritual Matters to put and keep men in Prison, and
 not endeavour to convince them of their Error, if in
 one they be, notwithstanding twice desired in writing
 scripturally by me, for you to render an Account of
 your Faith concerning your Church, Practice and
 Worship, to be true, and agreeable to the Practice of
 the Holy Men of old : your precedent Answer was
 neither Scriptural nor Reasonable to so Reasonable a
 Request of a Prisoner. Is it not your place to Exhort
 and Convince the Gainsayers by sound Doctrine ? But
 you shew that you have no regard to any thing but
 your own sinister Ends : But this know, The Lord
 our God hath bottled up the Tears of our Little Ones,
 who cannot but Weep for the Want of their Fa-
 thers, which should work to get Bread and others Ne-
 cessaries for them ; the Lord God of *Abraham, Isaac*
 and *Jacob* hath considered the Afflictions, and heard
 the Cry of his People, by reason of their Task-ma-
 sters, which are worse then the *Egyptians* of old ; for
 although they required their full Tale of Brick, yet
 they gave the People Liberty to gather Straw ; but
 many of us are kept in Prison, and cannot follow our
 lawful Callings, and yet are required and do pay our
 Taxes

Taxes to the King, and Levyes to the Constables and Poor ; and we have no help of any of you to maintain our Families; they and we may pine and starve for any regard that you seem to have of us, which sheweth what spirit you are of, even worse then *Pharach's Task-masters*, which the Lord overthrew ; and certainly he will *avenge our righteous Cause on our Persecutors*: ye shall certainly know, that ye have been warned by your Friend, who hath seen in the eternal Light *that your case is sad and miserable*: And truly, you are to be pained that ye should be so blind, *to run on in pursuance of your own Destructions, and will not take Counsel at the blessed Light in your selves, nor from any without you*. O consider your Ways: the Word of the Lord hath often run through me after this manner, *O ye Priests! the Way that you think to set up your selves, shall be your utter Overthrow*: Ye think to frighten people by your *Persecution* to sit down under your Teaching ; but alas for you ! it sets them further from you in their Hearts; for this is a day (Glory to God for evermore) wherein he is opening the Understandings of Thousands by his blessed Light in their Consciences, which ye despise, which is the Cause of your Blindness and Darknes, so that the people which ye have formerly made as your Asses to ride on, can now see the Angel flying in the midst of Heaven having the *Everlasting Gospel* to preach to them that dwell on the Earth, saying, *Fear God, and give Glory to his Name, for the Hour of his Judgment is come* ; and yet ye (*Ea'aam-like, who loved the wages of Unrighteousness*) cannot see the Angel. But O ye Priests ! if there be any remorse or tenderness of spirit left in any of you, return, & leave off oppressing the people, and putting those into Prison who for Conscience sake, seeing your Practices contrary to
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the Practices of the Ministers of Christ of old, cannot pay you Tythes, before the Lord wholly overturn you, and throw you into the Pit of Destruction, where you shall never rise more; and truly, this hasteneth upon you: and therefore all people, who in the least measure have your Understandings open'd to see the covetous practices of these Teachers to be like the False Prophets and Teachers of old, who fed themselves with the Fat, and clothed with the wool, but cared not for the Flock; and how they have led you sometimes into one Profession and sometimes into another, turning like the Wind for filthy Lucre; sometimes for a King, & sometimes against a King; so that they have manifested themselves neither to be true to God King nor Country, but have sought for their Gain from their Quarter, biting with their Teeth, and crying Peace, and he, that putteth not into their Mouthes they prepare War against him: I say unto you that see these things, Trust not your Souls under their Teaching; for Night is come upon them, they have no Vision, as themselves confess; and where there is no Vision, the people perish for lack of Knowledge; therefore come out from amongst them, partake not of their Sins, lest ye partake of their Plagues; come out of Babylon, for her Sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath remembred her Iniquities. So all mind the Leadings of the blessed Light in your Consciences, from which you can't hide your selves; it is and will be the Condemnation of all that are disobedient unto it; but it will lead all that are willing to follow it to the end out of all By-pathes of Unrighteousness and Unholiness, unto the Way of Righteousness and Holiness, where your Souls will find Rest for evermore.

J. W.